UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/264
24 March 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 24 MARCH 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement of the spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea issued on 19 March 1998 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) LI Hyong Chol
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

STATEMENT OF THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA ISSUED AT PYONGYANG ON 19 MARCH 1998

Recently, the United States of America has reorganized the Command of the United States Eighth Army stationed in south Korea and the Third Army in the United States mainland into a field army system.

The United States is open in saying that this step is aimed at increasing its combat efficiency and operation capacity in an "emergency".

The United States Eighth Army is the core unit of the United States Army in south Korea. And what the United States said about an "emergency" means an outbreak of a new war against our Republic.

It becomes known to the world that the United States is escalating the tension on the Korean peninsula to an extreme pitch by amassing the latest type of war equipment in south Korea under the pretext of a threat of a fictitious "preemptive strike" from somebody and the existence of a security "vacuum" over the Iraqi crisis.

This time, the United States has used the Iraqi crisis to execute once again the simultaneous reorganization of the Eighth Army in south Korea and Third Army in its mainland into a field army system following the reinforced deployment of the state-of-the-art military equipment in south Korea. This is evidence of the fact that the preparations to provoke a new war against our Republic have gone into a home stretch.

This clearly shows wherein lies the ulterior intention of the United States, which covertly says it is interested in improving Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States relations and in securing peace on the Korean peninsula.

If the United States persistently holds on to its policy of aggressive power and the policy of war, rather than extricating itself from the outmoded thinking in the cold war period, despite the sincere efforts of the Government of our Republic to prevent war and achieve lasting peace and stability on the Korean peninsula, it is quite evident what sort of counter-measures we should take against it.

This time, a wartime mobilization order was issued to the whole country and the entire armed forces, including the People's Army, were put into military exercises to cope positively with the United States manoeuvre for war preparations. This fully demonstrates the justness of our self-defensive measure as against the tense situation prevailing on the Korean peninsula.

On the eve of the second round of the "four-party talks", the United States reorganized its core units into a ready-for-action field army system. If it had

thought of gaining something from the current talks by posing a threat of force, it was a very foolish miscalculation.

The United States should clearly recognize that the policy of strength is by no means a panacea for solving problems, and should act with discretion.